Thomas Jefferson and David Stone: Enlightened Planters and the Definition of the Old South

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Introduction

David Stone, Governor of North Carolina in the early 1800s, and Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, were prominent men of the early Republic. They were both enlightened thinkers from the South who developed ideas and policies, which would influence later generations. But for some reason the South would not produce men like them in the later years of the ante-bellum era. What made these men different from those who followed them? How would defining them help to define the Old South? A comparison between the two might show similarities and inconsistencies that could give shape to the historiography of the Old South. All aspects of the personalities, characters, and intellects of David Stone and Thomas Jefferson would be difficult to compare, but there are some sources that can be used in comparing their lives. The relative values and extent of their wealth and landholdings; the particulars of their individual educations, as well as other early influences on their development; the details of both of their political careers; the contents of their libraries; the evidences of their interests in architecture and landscaping; and their somewhat ambivalent views on slavery can be traced through journals, letters, and documents. Such an examination should reveal enough of the minds of these men so as to point out certain inconsistencies in the accepted

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Introduction

David Stone, Governor of North Carolina in the early 1800s, and Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, were prominent men of the early Republic. They were both enlightened men of the South who developed ideas and policies which would influence later generations. But the same reason the South would not produce men like them in the later years of the ante-bellum era. What made these men different from those who followed them? How would defining them help to define the Old South? A comparison between the two might show some ideas and incidents that could give shape to the meaning of the Old South. All aspects of the personal and characters and biographies of David Stone and Thomas Jefferson would be difficult to compare, but there are some sources that can be used in comparing them. The relative wealth and status in their wealth and travelling; the particulars of their individual education, as well as other early influences on their development; the details of both of their political careers; the conditions of their financing; the evidences of their interaction and friendship; and their contrasting involvement with slavery can be traced through journals, letters, and other works. Such an examination should reveal enough of the minds of these men to point out certain transitions in the antebellum

view of the intellectual history of the Old South.

General Backgrounds

David Stone was born in 1770 in the state of North Carolina. He graduated from Princeton in 1788 and was admitted to the bar in 1791. He entered politics in 1789 and remained in public life on the state and national levels until 1814. Stone married twice. His first wife, Hannah Turner, betrothed to him in 1793, and bore him eleven children. She died in 1814, probably weakened from childbirth. In June 1817, David Stone began his second marriage to Sarah Dashiell of Washington D.C. She did not bear him any children. David Stone died on October 7, 1818 at the young age of 48. North Carolina newspapers remembered him kindly by calling him "a Gentleman of great erudition and learning, and [one] who had filled every honorable appointment which the State could bestow."[1] The Raleigh Minerva issued a eulogy in tribute calling him "a gentleman of such commanding intellect as rendered him AN HONOR TO HIS COUNTRY."[2]

Thomas Jefferson was born in 1743 in Albemarle County, Virginia. He graduated from William and Mary in 1762 and began a career in law. In 1774, Jefferson started his involvement in politics in the state, and then moved to the national level. Jefferson married Martha Wayles Skelton on January 1, 1772 who eventually bore him five children. She died in 1783 leaving Jefferson to raise the children. Jefferson did not remarry but instead buried himself in his work. Jefferson retired from public life in 1809 and remained a man of letters until his death on July 4, 1826.

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1 *Raleigh Register and North-Carolina Gazette*, October 9, 1818.
2 *The Raleigh Minerva,* October 9, 1818.

Wealth and Landholdings

Zedekiah Stone, David Stone's father, moved to North Carolina from the Massachusetts. He married a widow who brought landless Zedekiah a dowry of 560 acres. During the War of Independence, the elder Stone was a patriot and helped draft the North Carolina State Constitution of 1776. Later in public service, Stone held a seat in the North Carolina Assembly in 1777 and 1784 and North Carolina Senate in 1786. By the time Zedekiah Stone died in 1790, he had accumulated 25 slaves and 1,078 acres of land.[3] A portion of this estate went to David Stone.

David Stone was able to capitalize on the social standing he attained from his enterprising father. By the time David Stone died in October 1818, he had expanded his father's plantations. The younger Stone's Wake County plantation consisted of 3,000 acres, valued at $20,500, with twenty-five slaves, a gristmill, and a sawmill. In Bertie County, Stone had 3,880 acres of land, valued at $15,500 and thirty-six slaves.

Jefferson's ancestors also came from modest beginnings. Peter Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson's father, was a yeoman farmer who attained landholdings by surveying professionally. In 1730, Peter Jefferson received his first land grant of 322 acres in Albemarle County, Virginia. Shortly before his death, Peter Jefferson began a public life by serving in the House of Burgesses in 1754. By the time he died in 1757, Peter Jefferson had amassed 1300 acres of land and an undetermined number of slaves. Most of this wealth was passed on to Jefferson.

Records from a 1794 census show that Thomas Jefferson had capitalized on his

inherited landholdings. He had 5,500 acres and 105 slaves in Albemarle County, Virginia, which included Monticello, Tufton, and Shadwell plantations. In Bedford County, at Poplar Forest plantation outside of Lynchburg, Jefferson had landholdings of 3000 acres and forty-nine slaves. But unlike Stone, Jefferson's wealth would be depleted by his death due to bad financial decisions.

Education

Private tutors educated David Stone at an early age. He began Princeton University in 1786 at the age of sixteen. Stone entered the school as a sophomore and skipped his junior year because of his advanced academic abilities. David Stone graduated first in his class on September 24, 1788 giving the "salutatory oration in Latin, on the foundation of the law of nature."[4] At this point in his education, he began his training in law in North Carolina.

Thomas Jefferson had a similar educational background. Jefferson received private tutoring until the age of nine at Tuckahoe Plantation on the James River, the former plantation of William Randolph. Then Jefferson began Latin School under Reverend William Douglas, a Scottish clergyman of St. James in Goochland County. For five years Jefferson boarded at the Latin school, learning Latin, Greek, and French. When he turned fourteen, his father sent him to an Albemarle County school under Reverend James Maury of the Fredericksville parish. While boarding with the Maury family, Jefferson developed a love for violin and dance. Jefferson began his college career at the age of seventeen in

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3 *Bertie County Taxables, 1788-97*, 1790.
4 *The Independent Gazetteer or the Chronicle of Freedom*, Vol. 6, No. 877, Friday, October 3, 1788.

order to "get a more universal Acquaintance, which may hereafter be serviceable to me; and I suppose I can pursue my Studies in the Greek and Latin as well there as here, and likewise learning something of the Mathematics."[5] He started William and Mary in the spring of 1760 and finished his degree requirements in two years. After William and Mary, Jefferson began his informal training in law.

Early Influences

David Stone had three major influences early in life. The first was his Princeton education. There from 1786 to 1788, Stone was indoctrinated with a principally Federalist philosophy that dominated Princeton University. After Princeton, Stone would move to Halifax, North Carolina and live there from 1788 to 1793. Halifax was the principal site of the North Carolina independence movement and the Halifax Resolves were written there in the spring of 1776. Again as at Princeton, the Federalist sentiment was strong in the town commons and taverns of Halifax. Stone probably could not help but to be swayed by the arguments for federalism.

Finally, David Stone's choice of his teacher of law influenced his early life. William R. Davie, a strong federalist, taught Stone law for five years. Davie was also a graduate of Princeton. After school he became a patriot and was wounded in battle in June of 1779. Davie later studied law under Judge Spruce MaCay in Salisbury, North Carolina. After finishing his training, he started to practice law in Halifax. He was a framer of the United States Constitution in 1787 and later helped draft the Constitution of North

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5 Jefferson to John Harvie, January 14, 1760 in Julian P. Boyd (ed.) *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, (Princeton, 1950) I, 3.

Carolina at the Fayetteville Convention in 1789. Davie became the founder of the University of North Carolina by pushing a bill to charter the school. He would later hold political office in 1798 as a Federalist governor of North Carolina. After losing an election campaign in 1803, he retired to South Carolina and died in 1820. The impressionable David Stone developed his Federalist politics and his viewpoints on education under Davie.

Jefferson had a variety of influences early in life. First, his father and his father's value of education swayed Jefferson. Jefferson wrote that his "father's education had been quite neglected; but being of a strong mind, sound judgment and eager after information, he read much and improved himself."[6] Also Jefferson had access to the library of his Latin teacher, Reverend Maury, who possessed 400 volumes, an extensive collection of books for the time. Jefferson also received an enlightened education at William and Mary that would influence him the remainder of his life. The professor at William and Mary, who introduced Jefferson to the works of the enlightenment, was Dr. William Small. Jefferson felt that it was his "great good fortune, and probably fixed the destinies of my life, that Dr. William Small of Scotland was then professor of Mathematics, a man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged and liberal mind."[7] Later after William and Mary, studying law with George Wythe would influence Jefferson.

George Wythe was an Anti-Federalist after the War of Independence. During his

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6 Rosenman, Samuel (ed.), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1943*, (New York, 1950), 162-163.

guidance of five years with Jefferson, he exposed Thomas Jefferson to writings that would later reflect an Anti-Federalist sentiment. Wythe's choice of a beginning book of study for Jefferson was *Coke upon Littleton,* the first part of the *Institutes of the Laws of England.* The author, Sir Edward Coke, was a seventeenth century legalist. Coke was prominent as a drafter of the Petition of Right in 1628, a leader of the opposition party to James I and Charles I, and a champion of English liberties and rights. Through this directed reading, George Wythe initiated Jefferson's ideas on civil liberties and the English monarchy.

Political Career

David Stone began his political career as a Federalist delegate to the Fayetteville Convention on November 21, 1789. He was nineteen years old at the time. From 1790 to 1795 Stone served in the North Carolina General Assembly for the Edenton District. Still a Federalist, Stone became a North Carolina Superior Court Judge from 1795 to 1798. As a judge he recognized the courts as inadequate and weak. The Anti-Federalist power across the nation was being checked when Stone was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1798 for the 8th district of Edenton. The newspaper of the area felt that Stone was an excellent choice and wrote that Stone had "abilities, integrity, and patriotism of the gentlemen."[8] It was at this time in national politics that Stone began to change his views. He started voting Republican, or Anti-Federalist, on strictly party issues. These matters included the repeal of the restrictive Sedition Act and the defense of John Randolph. Selected for the Ways and Means Committee, Stone became involved in

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7 Jefferson to L.H. Giradin, January 15, 1815, in Lipscomb and Bergh (eds.), *Writings of Jefferson, XIV*, 231.
8 *The Newbern Gazette*, August 25, 1798.

the finances of the country. During this time he developed strong views against Hamilton's ideas on the funding of the national debt. He began expressing these views in correspondence and debate. In a letter dated March 11, 1800 from S. Pinto to David Stone, Pinto, a Republican from New England, agreeing with Stone wrote: "I fully subscribe to your opinion of public measures [and] venture today that a funding System and Republicanism are incompatible, not capable of breathing the same air."[9] Later, when the presidential election of 1800 had to be resolved in the House of Representatives, David Stone voted for Thomas Jefferson. This was Stone's final break with the Federalist Party. Stone then ran for the United States Senate in 1800 as a Republican. He beat his former mentor and teacher, William Davie, in the election.

Stone was a good Republican in most respects. He supported the repeals of the Judiciary Act of 1801, the Louisiana Purchase, and Pickney's Treaty. He did not support Jefferson's controversial Embargo Act of 1806. Thus Stone defined himself as a man who could politically stand on his own. Stone next served as governor of North Carolina from 1808 to 1810. This position helped him sharpen his executive skills. Still a Republican, Stone was elected to the North Carolina General Assembly and served from 1811 to 1812. As a legislator, Stone began to show his displeasure with the War of 1812. In 1812 he was elected to serve in the United States Senate again. This term proved disastrous for Stone. Stone was concerned about the defense of North Carolina during the War of 1812. A small invasion force landed on the Outer Banks on July 11, 1813. The British force led by Admiral Cockburn loaded supplies and left by July 17, 1813. North Carolina was

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9 S. Pinto to David Stone, March 11, 1800, North Carolina State Archives.

completely defenseless the entire time. Stone felt that Madison's war policies did not have the welfare of North Carolina in perspective. Turning against Republican policies, Stone returned to his Federalist beginnings. At home in North Carolina, this was viewed as an unwise political move on Stone's part. Most constituents and newspapers wished that Stone "would retire into merited obscurity."[10] By June of 1813 the whole state was in debate over the actions of Stone. At the University of North Carolina commencement, a disputation titled "Should a representative act agreeably to his own judgment or in conformity with the directions of his constituents?"[11] was directed at Stone. After much debate in the North Carolina General Assembly, Stone was censured in December 1813. The resolution for censure stated, "David Stone hath disappointed the reasonable expectations and incurred the disapprobation of this General Assembly."[12] At that point, Stone knew his political usefulness for the state was waning. He waited for the appropriate time and resigned his seat in the Senate in December of 1814. In his resignation letter to Governor Hawkins, Stone stated his inadequacy in the "political atmosphere of our country...so loaded with clouds and threatening in its aspect that I should certainly remain at the post assigned me if I conceived that by remaining I could be of any service, whatever sacrifice it might cost me. But my opinion and views differ so radically from those persons who conduct the affairs of the nation, and who appear to be strongly supported by the public sentiment of the nation, and as I am conscious I possess a very fallible judgment, but which, such as it is, must be my guide in the performance of my

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10 *Raleigh Register and North-Carolina Gazette*, September 24, 1813.
11 *The Star* (Raleigh), June 11, 1813.

public duty, entirely independent of and uncontrolled by party, I therefore conclude it's is best for me to withdraw from the scene."[13]

Jefferson's political career began in 1776 when he drafted a *Summary View of the Rights of British America*. This document used by Virginia's delegates to the First Continental Congress, promoted Jefferson to the forefront of American political theorists. He then wrote the Declaration of Independence in late June of 1776. He worked in the Virginia state legislature from 1776 to 1779. In the legislature, Jefferson sought to reform society along the lines of enlightened thinking. He helped reform the Virginia criminal code and establish religious freedom for Virginia. From 1779 to 1781 Jefferson was governor of Virginia. He was ineffective in this office as the British invaded Virginia during his tenure. He was a delegate to Congress in 1784 and a minister to France from 1784 to 1789 where he witnessed the French Revolution first hand. George Washington asked Jefferson to be secretary of state in 1790. He reluctantly served till 1793 when his disputes with the Federalist Hamilton became intolerable and he resigned. After receiving the second largest number of votes in the Presidential Election of 1796, Jefferson became vice president under the Federalist president John Adams in 1797. During this time period Federalist power grew due to the threat of war and anti-French sentiment. Anti-French sentiment allowed the Alien and Sedition Acts to be passed, which Jefferson opposed vehemently. Jefferson responded to these acts by orchestrating the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions. These resolutions assigned a role of watchdog over the federal government

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12 Haywood, Marshall De Lancey, Entry for "David Stone", *Biographical History of North Carolina: "Old North State" Edition*, 425.

to the states. Though never used, the resolutions showed Jefferson to be a champion of states' rights. Jefferson was elected to the office of President of the United States in 1800. He served as President for two terms from 1801 to 1809. His grand accomplishment during this time was the purchase of the Louisiana territory, an addition that doubled the size of the United States. Jefferson changed his Republican views of strict constitutional interpretations briefly in order to acquire the land. At this time Jefferson demonstrated that he was a man who did as conscience dictated and did not merely follow the party line. One unfortunate piece of legislation that passed during Jefferson's presidency was the Embargo Act of 1806, which cut off trade between the United States and England. This act produced an unstable economy that would last a generation. In 1809, after his last term as President of the United States, Jefferson stepped out of public life and retired to Monticello.

Views on Education

David Stone was a member of the North Carolina State Senate when his mentor, William R. Davie, pushed for the acquisition of land to accommodate a state supported university. Stone was nominated to the commission that was to pick the 640-acre site. The commission chose Chapel Hill as the site for the future school that would become the University of North Carolina. On this commission Stone established himself as someone who was interested in public education. From this position he became a trustee of the new university, which he would serve until his death in 1818.

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13 Haywood, Marshall De Lancey, Entry for "David Stone", *Biographical History of North Carolina: "Old North State" Edition*, 427.

Stone demonstrated his interest in education by serving the university in many capacities for 26 years. In December of 1792, he was nominated and placed on the committee to plan the educational curriculum for the university. Stone was also involved in hiring professors and finding the University of North Carolina a new president when one was needed. In 1795, Stone was granted power of attorney for the university in the Edenton District. As a trustee, he continually voiced his concerns. His passion is voiced in a letter to John Haywood, another trustee of the university and treasurer of the state of North Carolina for 40 years. In a letter dated December 1, 1799, Stone writes that he does not want "any event prejudicial to the Interests or impeding the University."[14] With this dedication to the University of North Carolina, an established pattern of concern for education is seen in Stone. But Stone also had educational interests in the local sphere. Stone encouraged children to go to local academies. If their tuition money ran short David Stone paid from his own pocket to ensure that the children would remain in school. Stone also evinced his devotion to local education by becoming one of the trustees who chartered Windsor Academy in Windsor, North Carolina.

Thomas Jefferson also valued education. Jefferson wanted to "Preach...a crusade against ignorance; [and] establish and improve the law for educating the common people."[15] On the state level, Jefferson developed bills for education including one to establish a public library and a bill for the "More General Diffusion of Knowledge." Jefferson wanted education removed from the hands of the rich and given to the people

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14 David Stone to John Haywood, December 1, 1799, The University Papers, University of North Carolina.
15 Jefferson to Wythe, August 13, 1786, in Foner (ed.), *Basic Writings*, 532.

and he so stated as such many times. But the true manifestation of his ideas on public education came in the form of the University of Virginia.

In the spring of 1814, Jefferson was invited to become a member of the board of trustees for Albemarle Academy, a small private school. It later would become Central College under his direction. Eventually, Jefferson received a public charter and funding for Central College to become the University of Virginia and moved the location of the school to centrally located Charlottesville, Virginia. Jefferson provided a breath of fresh academic air to the project. He became involved intimately with the school as an architect, curriculum advisor, and faculty employer. Jefferson also supplied a portion of the books for the university library from his own library. The doors opened on this crowning achievement on March 7, 1825. He then became the first rector and chairman of the board of trustees. Without doubt, Jefferson's concern for education can be seen in the time that he devoted to public education.

Libraries

David Stone's extensive library consisted of 1400 volumes, as shown by his estate records. Most of his collection was kept at Hope Plantation in Bertie County. His library at Hope had floor to ceiling bookcases in which to hold his collection of law and non-law books. Though documentation was not kept on the acquisition of the books, a few sources for purchases can be inferred. Some of the volumes might have been part of his education at Princeton. Others might have been acquired in Philadelphia and Washington during his years in Congress, as indicated in letters showing that he acquired books for his lawyer friend Peter Browne at that time. In a letter Peter Browne writes David Stone that

it will "oblige me much if you would find a copy of Gen. Lee's Oration."[16] In another letter, Browne asks Stone to find and "send me the pamplet (sic), entitled 'War in Disguise' to that I might hear both sides."[17] David Stone possessed a very contemporary library for his time. He owned the works of such enlightened thinkers as Francis Bacon, Ben Franklin, David Hume, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Swift, and Voltaire. He also had a copy of the crowning achievement of the Enlightenment, the *Encyclopedia Britannica.*

Thomas Jefferson's library, at one time, consisted of 6700 volumes, which was twice the size of the Library of Congress in 1815. He began to classify his books in 1783 with labels on the spine and a corresponding number in a catalog. Most visitors to Monticello were impressed with his collection that spanned the scope of human knowledge. All of the authors of the Enlightenment were represented including Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Newton, Kant, Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau. Of course Locke and Montesquieu's influence on Jefferson is made most evident in the Declaration of Independence that Jefferson authored. Other books in his collection included titles on the physical sciences, gardening, husbandry, architecture, history and politics. This collection contained all the material needed by a well-rounded, enlightened thinker.

Architecture and Landscaping

David Stone was not as ambitious as Thomas Jefferson in the field of architecture. But he had a respect for the craft and owned books on the subject. These books were the

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16 Peter Browne to David Stone, January 18, 1800, North Carolina State Archives.
17 Peter Browne to David Stone, March 12, 1806, North Carolina State Archives.

Practical House Carpenter; or, Youth's Instructor: containing a Great Variety of Useful Designs in Carpentry and Architecture by William Pain and the *British Architect: Or, The Builders Treasury of Staircases* by Abraham Swan. The floor plan for David Stone's Hope mansion is a variation of Plate XLI in Swan's book. Little is known about his Wake County house but considering what is known about Stone, it was probably similar to Hope in magnitude. In the area of gardening and landscaping, Stone owned books too numerous to list. This would suggest an interest on his part in this subject. Whether this interest warranted action is a good question. Landscape archaeology should be done at Hope Plantation in order to determine to what extent David Stone brought his reading to reality.

Jefferson, on the other hand, was an innovator in architecture. This is easily seen in Monticello, Poplar Forest, and Academic Village at the University of Virginia. Though at times his innovations were not practical, they were balanced, meticulously produced and inspiring. In the area of landscaping, Jefferson kept journals in great detail. Landscape archaeology and his journals have shown Jefferson to be an imaginative gardener, but as in architecture, his gardening often lacked practicality. One such case, in which I took a small part, was confirmed the summer of 1998 at Poplar Forest. Archaeological evidence proved that Jefferson removed dirt from his back lawn in order to produce a sloping lawn for the planting of Kentucky coffee trees. The dirt removed was placed in a huge pile on the side of the house, since Jefferson intended to plant willow trees on this mound. Jefferson did not think of the drainage problem for the willows and the transplanted trees eventually died due to the lack of water, leaving a bare mound of dirt.

Slavery

Nothing in David Stone's letters revealed his feelings on the issue of slavery. The fact that David Stone owned slaves would appear to demonstrate his position, but we know that Stone educated his slaves to read and write even though it was frowned upon. Stone said many times at the North Carolina capital that if his slaves were to go free tomorrow he would want them to at least be able to read and write their own names so that they could survive in the world. That does not define Stone as an abolitionist but as an enlightened thinker who could place himself in the shoes of others who did not have his advantages. One can only speculate about his true feelings on slavery and the paradox that must have existed in the mind of a subscriber to the Enlightenment who also owned slaves.

Thomas Jefferson was also an enigma on the issue of slavery. Early in his political career he tried to pass a bill to abolish slavery in Virginia. Also, Jefferson defended a slave's right to freedom in a case early in his law career. He lost the case but not before he declared to the whole courtroom and his mentor, opposing attorney George Wythe, that "under the law of nature all men are born free."[18] In dealing with the Northwest territory, Jefferson stressed that all new state governments in the new territories should not be permitted slavery after the year 1800. But nowhere is his scorn of slavery better stated than in *Notes on Virginia.*

"The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it;...the parent storms,

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18 Jefferson, Howell vs. Netherland, April 1770, *Cases Determined in General Court*, 90.

the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances...And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever."[19]

The paradox of the situation was that, even after all the rhetoric, Jefferson kept his slaves. But stepping back from our twenty-first century perspective, we should understand that Jefferson appeared as a liberal on the issue of the slavery to his peers.

Conclusions on the South

Some conclusions on the Old South can be drawn from the comparison between David Stone and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson and Stone both rose to prominence not as sons of wealthy landowners but as the sons of men who only can be defined as yeoman farmers. Conclusions by W. J. Cash and others southern historians about a small aristocracy in the south are for all intents and purposes correct. The loose social structures described by Cash and Frank L. Owsley are evident in the lines of Jefferson and Stone. They moved up the ranks much as Owsley wrote "individuals [who] were constantly rising from farmer to planter class."[20] Easily the Irishman in Cash's analogy can be replaced with Peter Jefferson or Zedekiah Stone. Comparing their sons, Thomas Jefferson and David Stone, both enlightened thinkers of the South show a great deal of similarity. Their educational backgrounds resemble each other. They were intelligent men

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19 Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, in *Basic Writings*, 160.
20 Owsley, Frank L., *Plain Folk of the Old South*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1982), 142.

who valued education and learning, but this is not the picture painted of the Old South by most historians. Grady McWhiney, a southern historian, states in his article on education in the Old South that "most southerners...had far less regard for formal education than the average northerner."[21] But this is not the case for Jefferson and Stone. Jefferson and Stone were not the rich sons that Eaton and others contend received the lion's share of the education in the Old South. Jefferson and Stone were products of the Enlightenment and the American Revolution. Both received quality educations in the South. What happened to the Old South to make a change in historians' perception of the issue of southern education? The invention of the cotton gin changed the face of the Old South. With the cotton gin, slavery received a renewed breath of life and began to expand across the region. With that expansion, abolitionists appeared on the scene to oppose slavery around the late 1820s and 1830s. The change in the Old South occurs during that time as the South tried to become "more self-conscious and began to take steps in that direction of cultural independence."[22] So like a child stepping away from his mother, the Old South stepped away from the North educationally and culturally. Isolated southerners began to make mistakes in their educational choices without the veteran educational leadership the more populous North enjoyed.

Jefferson and Stone were also men of letters. They savored and enjoyed the written word as can be seen from their libraries and letter writing. But again this is not the typical modern interpretation of men in the Old South. According to most late twentieth

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21 Mc Whiney, Grady, "Education in the Old South: A Re-examination", *The Southern Enigma: Essays on Race, Class, and Folk Culture*, Walter J. Fraser, Jr. and Winford B. Moore, Jr., (eds.), 169.

century historians, southerners were influenced by oral speech and "pronouncements of leading men at informal gatherings at country stores, rural churches, and county courtyards."[23] W.J. Cash in *The Mind of the South* states that southerners had a "fondness for rhetoric . . .a gorgeous, primitive art, addressed to the autonomic system and not to the encephalon, rhetoric is of course dear to the heart of the simple man everywhere."[24] But Jefferson and Stone abhorred public speaking and preferred to commit their best thoughts to paper.

So why are there these discrepancies in the standard view of the Old South and the evidence of the lives of Jefferson and Stone? Are Jefferson and Stone just small lights in the dark world of the Old South? Are there others like them? A basic change in the culture of the Old South occurred during the late 1820s and early 1830s. Careful research into the lives of other colonial and federal personalities of the North and South could reveal much about how, when, and why the Old South changed from enlightened region in the forefront of the American Revolution to repressive backward region described by later historians of the Old South. The invention of the cotton gin and abolitionist movement may well account for some of this changes but I do not think that they fully explain the matter. More importantly the study of Jefferson and Stone affirms the need for southern historians to more closely scrutinize and map the intellectual history of the Old South especially in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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22 Eaton, Clement, *The History of the Old South: The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation*. (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1987), 446.
23 Eaton, Clement, *The History of the Old South: The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation*. (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1987), 446.
24 Cash, W.J., *The Mind of the South*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 51.

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